

General Clinton's Headquarters  
Hankinson House  
Freehold Smithburg Road  
Freehold, Monmouth County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-227

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13-FREHOW

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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13. Freehold

General Clinton's Headquarters  
Hankinson House  
Freehold Smithburg Road  
Freehold, Monmouth County, New Jersey

Owner: Mr. W. Rhea Moreau

Date of Erection: About 1755

Architect:

Builder: John Middleton (probable)

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - twenty inch  
stone wall

Exterior walls - frame  
construction; the frame is  
filled between the shingles  
and the inside wall with mud  
and straw

Interior walls - plaster, some  
room ends paneled

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch with original  
shingles on the main structure,  
tin over shingles on wing

Historical Data:

There appears to be some uncertainty as to  
the date of erection and the builder of the Hankinson  
House. Mills gives the date as about 1755 and the  
builder as a member of the Hankinson family. Moreau

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12 FEBROW

declares the builder to have been John Middleton, and the date to be probably fifty years before the Revolution. The Hankinsons appear not to have obtained possession of the house until after the war.

The Hankinson House is known as Clinton's Headquarters. It was used by Sir Henry Clinton on June 27, 1778, the day before the Battle of Monmouth. At that time it was owned by Mrs. William Conover.

Mrs. Conover buried her china and plate by the rose bushes in her garden and secreted her fine furniture in the woods. When Sir Henry arrived he noticed the absence of furniture and soon found out what had happened. Calming Mrs. Conover's fears, he cajoled her into sending for the furniture. When it arrived, he would not allow it to be brought in; by the next morning most of it had been stolen; only a few articles were saved. Sir Henry also turned her out of her bedroom and forced her to sleep in her milk room surrounded by her negro wenches.

The old house has had many owners. It has been sold twice by the Sheriff of the county and in 1793 it was sold under a "writ of sequestration" issued by the Court of Chancery. The commissioners in this later case sold the property to Kenneth Hankinson, Jr. In 1829 Captain William Forman, a naval man, bought the farm and house from the Sheriff for \$1921. Six years later it was sold for \$4000.

Moreau gives a description of the house which he noted during the period repairs were made. The corner posts are 12 x 13; these posts are found in several rooms and in the corners of the halls. The frame was apparently put up in sections; the hall was one section and the rooms the other. To further strengthen the frame 6 x 6 cedar posts were placed along the windows from the sill to the rafter plate.

N.J.  
13 FREEHOLD

The window frames were cut out of solid oak six inches square. The floor beams are 8 x 10 spaced sixteen inches apart with 12 x 12 center beam. The roof has 4 x 7 oak rafters on a 6 x 8 plate with three 6 x 8 tie beams running across the garret and keystone into plates at either side.

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Delatash, George, local historian

Field Book and Drawings of Survey

Walter B. Smith  
Supervising Historian

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Reviewed  
Sept 2, 1936  
THW